



INDIANA COMMISSION ON COMMUNITY SERVICE & VOLUNTEERISM
Meeting Minutes

September 12, 2006
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

**Indiana Government Center
302 W. Washington Street
Conference Room 12
Indianapolis, Indiana**

The ICCSV Meeting was called to order by Commission Chair David Reingold at 1:06 P, followed by the official roll call. Those in attendance were:

Rick Bentley	Marty Moore
Phyllis Kincaid	Carter Phegley
Louis Lopez	David Reingold
Belinda Munson	Wesley Simms
Jackie McCracken	Michele Sullivan

The following OFBCI staff members were in attendance:

Paula Parker-Sawyers	Janet Simpson
Cecelia Johnson Powell	Chuck Templin
Carey Craig	Erin Wright

Commission Chair Reingold entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the August 9, 2006 meeting. Michele Sullivan made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Wesley Simms. The motion was carried.

Executive Director Paula Parker-Sawyers thanked the board for coming and proceeded to lead the discussion of the grant application review and selection process. She asked the board to turn to the Proposed Indiana AmeriCorps Grant Application Review and Selection Process flow chart in their meeting materials. Ms. Parker-Sawyers gave a brief explanation of the flow charts, reminding the commission that Indiana's funding comes in two ways. The first is Formula Funding which are funds allotted to our state based on population and the amount of dollars the Corporation for National and Community Service was given through congress. The second is Competitive Funds which is a pool of funding set aside by CNCS. The Formula Funding flow chart is a three year cycle which sets aside funds for continuing formula grantees; the grantee has a staff review of their

application and past performance; the recommendations are sent to the ICCSV board; the ICCSV board decides to renew the grantee or to not renew the grantee; if the ICCSV decides not to renew the grantee, the funds that were set-aside are added to the available formula funds for new or re-competing programs.

Commissioner Gloria Balerini arrived at 1:11 PM.

The Competitive Funds flow chart outlines the issuance of the RFP soliciting applications for remaining formula funds and competitive funds. The review process for these applications is peer and staff reviews, with the recommendations being sent to the ICCSV commission. If the commission decides the program should be funded, the applications are ranked with the highest ranked applications being sent to CNCS for Competitive consideration. A pre-award risk assessment will be conducted for new applicants prior to the ICCSV approving the grants for the national competition. Executive Director Parker-Sawyers advised the pre-award risk assessment will give the commission a sense of how ready the grantee is to receive the funding; identify their weaknesses, if any; if those weaknesses can be resolved; do they have the dollar match as required or if they are in significant debt. Even though the grantee has written a great grant and everything makes sense on paper, the commission and OFBCI want to be assured they are really ready to receive the grant.

Wesley Simms asked if the depth of the investigation at this point was more in-depth than what had been previously done and if everyone who applies for a grant will have a pre-award risk assessment. Executive Director Parker-Sawyers asked OFBCI's Account and Compliance Officer Chuck Templin and Senior Program Officer Erin Wright to explain what is currently being done.

Chuck Templin advised he looks at their financial statements, current assets over current liabilities, and conducts a complete financial analysis. He checks the ability of the grantee to meet their dollar match, the ability to meet their ongoing obligations and their ability to do what they say they want to do. He further stated that Erin looks at the programmatic side of the grant. She determines if they have the ability to operate their programs; do they have the basis to comply with the corporation's process to comply governance, policy and procedures; what is their staffing structure; and looks at how their AmeriCorps program will fit into their organization.

Erin Wright advised the staff review is a review of the proposal and the pre-award risk assessment is an on-site assessment of the overall organization. She further stated that due to the intensive, comprehensive nature of the pre-award risk assessment process, there isn't the staff capacity to conduct the assessment on all applicants prior to the Commission's funding decision meeting.

Executive Director Parker-Sawyers stated that she has been working on building relationships with grantees' executive directors. Ms. Parker-Sawyers conducted a half-day orientation with the executive directors of Indiana's new AmeriCorps State grantees

in August. The goal is to ensure that the leadership of grantee organizations understands the AmeriCorps program.

Executive Director Parker-Sawyers advised the board that discussion needed to be held regarding competitive grant proposals being sent to the Corporation. As the flow chart suggests the proposals would be ranked, with #1 being the best, prior to being sent to CNCS for competitive consideration. For example, if 4, 5 or 10 proposals are sent for competitive funding and only 1 or 2 are funded, then the question remains what does the commission do with those that weren't funded? The flow chart suggests that those would then be moved over and be funded as formula funding. Ms. Parker-Sawyers asked the commission if this was the approach they wished approved or if those proposals that were not approved for national funding are at the end of the line for funding.

Wesley Simms asked if there was a reason why the OFBCI wasn't doing a pre-award risk assessment for grants submitted for formula funding. He further asked what the downside was of moving those not approved competitively over to formula funding. Ms. Parker-Sawyers advised that funds may not be available for re-compete grants or for someone that perhaps the OFBCI had nurtured along, it may eliminate grantees or may minimize the number of dollars awarded to grantees. She further stated the very best should be funded based on the Commission's assessment of the portfolio of applicants. Pre-award risk assessments will be conducted on applications being considered for formula funding prior to the receipt of Corporation decisions on the competitive applications.

Phyllis Kincaid advised that during the last commission meeting, the program committee discussed making sure the very best grants were funded and had discussed having a screening criteria in place that would rank each applicant. She further stated she felt it wasn't fair to rank the top 4 and if they weren't funded nationally then they wouldn't get anything. Phyllis advised if they were ranked in a non-partial way by a screening committee of commission members and staff, and two are funded, it is only fair the remaining two receive funds as well.

Jackie McCracken stated the previous discussion assumed that all grantees were within the guidelines of the current Sustainability Policy. She further stated in 2004 the ICCSV approved the sustainability policy. This currently means if they were not funded nationally then they could not be funded with formula dollars if they were no longer formula-eligible per the policy.

Executive Director Parker-Sawyers stated this was the first year the Sustainability Policy had to be enforced. Commissioner Billy Sue Smith arrived at 1:32 PM. Commission Chair Reingold indicated there was a possibility that applications might be the same initiative (such as homeless issues, etc), and reminded the commission of their concerns relative to the importance of geographic distribution. Wesley Simms indicated it appeared as though there is a process in place that is pretty objective as to who was funded and who was sent forward and asked if this was an opportunity to create an exception. Paula Parker-Sawyers advised it isn't a matter of creating an exception, it is

just choosing a path in which applications will be submitted. Those applications not approved on a competitive basis would be reconsidered in the formula process, just taking their place as the top 3 in that process rather than not being considered at all.

Billie Sue Smith asked what would happen when the funding dollar amount from the Corporation for National and Community Service was cut. Ms. Parker-Sawyers advised the OFBCI staff and Commission would use the same process, using the lesser amount of funding. All information will be presented to the commission to decide to either fund by rank and when the money is depleted, those who didn't rank as high would not receive funding. She further indicated another possibility might be to cut the grantee's budget by the same percent as Indiana's budget cut and ask the grantees if they can work with that lower amount.

Marty Moore asked David Reingold and Paula Parker-Sawyers how important it was to the CNCS that the dollars be spread out throughout the state and not centralized. Paula Parker-Sawyers stated there wasn't a criteria, it was appropriate for the commission to decide this issue.

Michele Sullivan stated it was more about the quality of a program and not so much about the diversification of the projects. Commission Chair Reingold mentioned there was a way to hold true to the rankings and to basically follow the path outlined in the proposed changes. If an application is sent up to the competitive round and comes back and would then be considered as preferred applicant. The OFBCI staff would review to see that in fact there is a set of proposals to fund that does attempt to look at the services to be delivered as well as geographic location. Louis Lopez asked if some of those issues could be addressed in the RFP. Executive Director Parker-Sawyers advised the RFP does suggest to applicants to consider geography, the Corporation's strategic plan, and this information is also covered in the OFBCI's technical assistance workshops. Ms. Parker-Sawyers further stated the OFBCI's goal has been not only to get more grants; it is about getting better quality of grants. Michele Sullivan advised the Learn and Serve formula grants are for 6 years and then they no longer receive formula funding.

Commission Chair Reingold asked the commission if anyone was opposed to the idea of competitive applications, not successful at competitive level, returning to the top level of the formula pool of applicants. Michele Sullivan asked if they were pre-ranked before being sent in competitively. Erin Wright advised they are considered relative to the other applications that are received, however competitive applications are due on January 25, 2007 and recipients are notified in May. Indiana's formula grant application is due to the Corporation in August. Belinda Munson asked for a better clarification as to the commission's vote to fund the Governor's Initiative proposal, stating she had not seen any supporting material regarding it. Executive Director Parker-Sawyers advised that the concept paper, which was submitted in the middle of July, was available. Belinda Munson further stated everyone wanted to support the Governor's Health Initiative and the commission voted to add more money during the June 14, 2006 meeting because it was a good idea. Belinda further stated she didn't personally realize the connection, that the extra funds were from formula funding and the reason this matter needs to be

resolved is to eliminate this type of circumstance from occurring in the future. Paula Parker-Sawyers stated as a result of the left over funds, the commission found themselves having to award that money to the Governor's Initiative, giving it back to the CNCS, or possibly giving it to grantees that had not asked for the additional money and were not able to match the funds.

Jackie McCracken pointed out on the "Proposed Indiana AmeriCorps Funding Process for New and Recompete Formula Funds" diagram that new applications will not be sent to CNCS for competitive consideration until the results of the pre-award risk assessment are received. The diagram is misleading. Erin Wright clarified that the diagram should be depicting that, once the Commission decides which applications may be sent to CNCS for competitive consideration, the OFBCI staff will conduct the pre-award risk assessment. If the results of the assessment are satisfactory, then the application will be included in the portfolio of competitive applications to CNCS. If the results of the pre-award risk assessment are unsatisfactory, the application will no longer be considered for AmeriCorps State competitive or formula funds.

Commission Chair Reingold stated the process makes sense, and reminded the commissioners to make sure they don't remove the commission's or staff's ability to make decisions, to be guided by peer or staff review, and to remember the review process is for purposes of guidance, not as a mechanical machine to spit out results. It is important for the commission to hold onto their ability to use judgment in order to serve the residents of Indiana. Ms. Parker-Sawyers stated the final determination on the formula package will include those proposals that were ranked for formula funding as well as those competitively funded programs that were not funded at the national level as a total package based on criteria established by the commission in that year.

Executive Director Paula Parker-Sawyers led the discussion reference **The Rationale for Recommended Policies and Processes.**

Issue Area 1: *Process for Competitive & Formula New/Recompete versus Formula Continuation Applications.* These funding pools, competitive and formula, are needed. Continuation grants are the key as long as they have not done anything illegal, immoral or unethical. If they have also complied with all reporting criteria of the Corporation, they should be re-funded.

Issue Area 2: *ICCSV Funding Recommendations/Decisions.* This issue area takes some of the objectivity away from the commission, but also gives them room with respect to the kind of approval they give.

Issue Area 3: *Timing of Pre-Award Risk Assessment.* This issue area discusses the time frame of the pre-award risk assessments for the 2007-2008 new applicants. This time frame is to ensure completion by May when the OFBCI receives the results from CNCS of those who may not have been funded competitively as well as not presenting to the commission any programs that have not passed the pre-award risk assessment.

Issue Area 4: *Decisions regarding Competitive Applications and Formula Funding.* This area details the process for formula verses competitive funds.

Issue Area 5: *Continuing Formula Grantees Applying for Competitive Funding “Mid-Cycle”.* This area is for organizations that are currently in the middle of their 3 year funding cycle and are virtually guaranteed continued funding. Grantees can apply for competitive funding consideration during their three year cycle. Habitat for Humanity was in their third year of funding for 2006-2007 and submitted their application for a competitive grant. This issue area allows them to apply and to obtain assistance from the OFBCI staff.

Commission Chair Reingold advised the commissioners that the OFBCI is asking them to take action on the aforementioned five issue areas. A discussion by commissioners ensued and they noted under suggested policy, #4, which states: *Additional approved applications (but not sent up for competitive consideration) will be funded based on highest ranking and the amount of formula funds available.* The commission suggested the following be added to this issue “Based on the commission’s discretion and criteria.” It was also discussed adding the following to Issue Area 5 under suggested policy, which states “*Continuation Formula grantees may compete for competitive funds during any open Request for Proposal process. As a continuation formula grantee, funding will be set aside for the grantee, so entering into the competition is at risk to the grantee or ICCSV.*” The commission suggested the aforementioned read “*Continuation Formula grantees may request to be submitted for competitive funds during any open Request for Proposal process. As a continuation formula grantee, funding will be set aside for the grantee, so entering into the competition is at risk to the grantee or ICCSV.*”

Commission Chair Reingold entertained a motion to accept the ICCSV Grant Application Review and Selection Process, with the notations on issue area 4 and 5 as noted. Motion made by Wesley Simms, seconded by Phyllis Kincaid. The motion passed 11-0.

Louis Lopez stated he wanted to compliment the OFBCI for their continued hard work.

Paula Parker-Sawyers advised the commissioners that the next section in their meeting folder, Current Indiana AmeriCorps Grant Application Review and Selection Process was for information purposes only.

Executive Director Parker-Sawyers brought up the next item agenda to be discussed, which was the Grievance Policy. She indicated the purpose of this policy was to establish a grievance policy for a sub-grantee organization participating in one or more of Indiana’s national service programs managed by the OFBCI, and had resulted from an action the ICCSV Commission had taken reference to the funding for Habitat for Humanity. The OFBCI’s Chief Financial Officer, Carey Craig, explained to the commission that pursuant to Article V, Section 3 of the ICCSV’s amended and restated by-laws effective August 11, 2005, the chair, with approval from the board of commissioners, shall commission and appoint a grievance committee. The charge of the committee shall be to serve as an appellate body for the review of regulatory and

procedural decisions rendered by the executive director. The committee shall have the authority to collect evidence, statements, and other facts relevant to the grievance, including sensitive information. It shall deliver opinions and its judgments shall be binding on all parties. The committee does not have subpoena authority or the power to compel witnesses or evidence. Mr. Craig also indicated this policy does not apply to national service program participants or recipients of service ("clients"), individually or collectively. If the commission chooses to accept this grievance policy, the committee shall be comprised of not less than three and not more than five commissioners. A commissioner shall not be appointed to the committee against his/her will. Assignment to the committee shall be for the length of a commissioner's term of service. There will also be a need for a quorum and to maintain meeting minutes. He further advised that the Grievance Procedures as outlined in Section H should be overseen by a neutral person who is not participating in or making any decisions relative to a subgrantee. Commission Chair Reingold stated this policy was designed to give the commission some structure. Mr. Craig added the policy was designed in an effort to take care of an issue at the lowest possible level between the subgrantee and the agency. He further stated in some cases, this might not happen, but serves as a second level before going to the Attorney General's Office. Louis Lopez advised those issues should be handled administratively by the Executive Director as the commission could be bogged down as a result of this grievance policy. Commission Chair Reingold indicated the grievance policy was a shared authority between the OFBCI staff and the commission and further stated the staff and executive officials of the ICCSV need to have authority. He further stated there is a need to have a process for grantees to follow, if necessary. The commission further discussed the possibility of establishing an ad-hoc group as the need arises, at the chair's discretion. Jackie McCracken advised the grievance process should begin with the OFBCI and if the grievance is not resolved, the subgrantee can go to the next level. Ms. McCracken asked if there was a way to do this that would involve both the OFBCI staff and the commission.

Executive Director Parker-Sawyers advised this proposed grievance policy would be revised to a simpler form which states that after all steps have been exhausted at the staff level, then the matter will then be brought to the commission and the chair. The OFBCI will have an internal operating procedure. She told the commission the revised policy would be discussed at the December meeting because the September meeting replaced the October meeting.

The final agenda item to be discussed was the 2005-2006 Sustainability Plan Guidance as of January 7, 2005. Ms. Parker-Sawyers reminded the commission this sustainability plan was what was causing some of them concern, specifically if a program had been funded for the entire 6 years and had basically exhausted their funding opportunity, as far as formula dollars are concerned, the basis of the discussions have been does the policy remain as in the past or are there revisions or edits that need to be made. Carey Craig stated that in 2003-2004 a new set of AmeriCorps regulations were drafted by the CNCS and only a handful of states have a sustainability policy. He further stated there are advantages in having a mix of experienced grantees and new grantees so there can be peer mentoring and the exchange of ideas; for that reason, we want to insure that

programs can continue to receive AmeriCorps monies after six years of funding. However, we have determined that a program will not receive more than six years of formula funding. This means that a program must be strong enough to compete in the competitive process in order to continue to receive funding in years 7+. Ms. Parker-Sawyers indicated this part of the sustainability plan creates a problem for the OFBCI and if the commission would like to make changes, this would be one of the areas that need to be addressed. One item not answered in this current document is when a grantee can reapply, following their 6 years of formula funding, if they aren't funded in the competitive process. Michele Sullivan indicated the AmeriCorps Learn and Serve funding process is six years and then they are out for one complete funding cycle. The grantee can reapply, but it can't as the same exact program. The grantee needs to make significant changes in the scope and parameters of their program. Marty Moore reminded the commission that because a program wasn't sustainable, it didn't mean it wasn't a wonderful program. Not for profits are created for a cause or purpose, not to be dependent on funding. Louis Lopez stated the initiative needs to be sustainable.

Gloria Balerini commented that an organization that has AmeriCorps members should be aware of the funding cycles and the fact they will be running out of money. She further stated if the organization leaders are trained and given support to look for other funding sources and have documentation supporting their efforts, should be handled differently than an organization who has not applied for any funding or has shown no initiative to do so. Wesley Simms indicated that extreme circumstances should be given some flexibility and allowed to go beyond the 6 year deadline as they made a good faith effort to diversify their funding streams. He also stated it should be worded clearly that the burden of proof will rely heavily on the organization. Cecelia Johnson-Powell shared with the staff the implication of continued funding after 6 years that additional money is tied up for that time frame. Therefore, formula dollars may not be available.

Carter Phegley excused himself from the meeting at 3:10 PM.

Commission Chair Reingold suggested the commission maintain the current sustainability policy with the following modification. After six years of formula funding, the grantee would have to sit out for a funding cycle, then propose an effort or project which was new or different from what they had previously been funded to do. Jackie McCracken made the motion and it was seconded by Gloria Balerini. The motion to modify the sustainability policy passed unanimously, 10-0.

Executive Director Parker-Sawyers updated the commission on a few items which had occurred since the last meeting. As part of the State Service Plan, readers of the Friday Night Facts e-newsletter were asked to participate in a survey. The purpose of this survey was to get some indication of what Indiana's general population believed to be important volunteer service areas that needed to be addressed. The raw results from Survey Monkey were passed out to the commission. Executive Director Parker-Sawyers advised she was working with David Reingold to incorporate these responses in the State Service Plan. Based on the results, Mentoring Children and Youth was a high priority.

The OFBCI requested a two week extension for the State Service Plan and the request was granted. Therefore, it will be due the first of October.

The second update by Ms. Parker-Sawyers was the AmeriCorps Opening Ceremonies and Retreat which will take place October 17-18, 2006 at the Waycross Conference Center in Brown County. The ceremonies will begin at 10 AM on October 17th and will conclude at 4 PM on October 18th. She advised the commission if any of them would like to attend, they were more than welcome to come and stay overnight, just to let the OFBCI know so accommodations can be made.

Ms. Parker-Sawyers also thanked the commission for attending the calling or sending a card, and appreciated all of their thoughts and prayers due to the passing of her husband, Jim.

Commission Chair Reingold thanked Executive Director Parker-Sawyers and the OFBCI staff for their continued work. In closing, Marty Moore made a motion to include in the meeting minutes a 'Vote of Confidence' for the OFBCI staff and for the Executive Director for the wonderful job they had done. The motion was seconded by Wesley Simms.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Simpson
Administrative Assistant